

ISSUE 7

FREE

STEREO FLAVORS

FOOD & CULTURE MAGAZINE



GLIZZY ON RYE
CHOPPED HOAGIES AREN'T REAL
LEMON DROP WATER ICE
HOAGIE DIP

MSG: HOW AMERICA LOST ITS DAMN MIND
OVER A LITTLE WHITE POWDER
THOU SHALT NOT OBEY THY RECIPE
SIKIL PAK

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I wanted this to be a summer issue. That was the plan.

Of course, Stereo Flavors doesn't always follow a calendar. It's less of a publication schedule and more of a weather system. Storms come through, the sun peeks out, and eventually the thing takes shape. And now? It's here.

There was a point where I thought about dropping the ball. Letting this one go. Too many ideas I couldn't get to. Too many stories left half-cooked. I outline things and sometimes they work out, and sometimes they laugh in my face. But we soldier on. We keep pushing, editing, eating, stressing, rewriting, shooting, laughing, deleting, and somehow, it turns into a magazine.

If this issue had a smell, it would be grilled meats, cold drinks, and the faint chemical burn of sunscreen. The sound? A busted stereo on the sidewalk, Miller High Lifes clinking, someone yelling "Yo!" from down the block.

I say this a lot, but I mean it. I couldn't do this alone. Not just because I physically can't, but because I wouldn't want to.

I'm irrationally proud of one thing above all: that I haven't quit. Even when I feel like an impostor. Even when I'm tired of staring at InDesign files at 1 a.m. The show must go on. This isn't a themed issue. It's just where we're at. Issue 7. A little rough around the edges, but real. And if the magazine's growing up, I guess that means I'm finally learning to shed the part of myself that thinks this thing has to be perfect. Maybe it never will be. Maybe that's the point.

Glad you're here.

TEAM & CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Steve Martinho

PHOTOGRAPHER

K.C. Tinari

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH

K.C. Tinari

CONTRIBUTORS & PEOPLE WE OWE A DRINK TO.

Dawn Rulli, K.C. Tinari, Jason Okdeh, Jason Trojanowski, Claire Trindle, Ian Moroney, Sharon Thompson Schill, Scott Sumsy, Vincent Ortega, and readers like you.

ADVERTISING & INQUIRIES

hello@stereoflavors.com



IN THIS ISSUE

Lemon Drop Water Ice

by Claire Trindle..... 3

Glizzy On Rye

by Steve Martinho..... 7

MSG: How America Lost Its Damn Mind Over a Little White Powder..... 15

Summer of Pho

by Jason Trojanowski..... 19

Chopped Hoagies

Aren't Real..... 23

Hoagie Dip

by Jason Okdeh..... 28

THOU SHALT NOT

OBEY THY RECIPE 29

Sikil Pak

by Ian Moroney..... 32

LEMON DROP WATER ICE

BY CLAIRE TRINDLE

INGREDIENTS

9 OZ LEMON-FLAVORED VODKA.

I used Deep Eddy, but honestly, whatever lemon vodka you've got gathering dust works.

3 OZ ORANGE LIQUEUR.

That Cointreau? Triple Sec? The random bottle your aunt gave you? Yeah, that'll do.

6 OZ SIMPLE SYRUP.

If you don't have it, it's just equal parts sugar and water, heated 'til the sugar's gone, then cooled down. Easy peasy.

METHOD

Let's Make Some Boozy Ice! Get your whisk on: Grab a freezer-safe container. Seriously, any container that fits in your freezer works. Dump in the lemon vodka, orange liqueur, simple syrup, lime (or lemon!) juice, and that plain old water. Give it a good whisk until everything's playing nice.

Shallow is key for that good stuff: If you can, use a tray or a container that lets this mix spread out a bit. We're going for a shallow freeze here, kinda like those big tubs of water ice at the stand. It just freezes better for that perfect consistency. A baking dish works wonders.

Nap time for your booze: Stick that whole situation in the freezer. Leave it overnight. Don't touch it. Let it do its thing.

6 OZ LIME JUICE.

I had lime juice handy, but if you've only got lemons, just use those! Fresh is always best, but no one's judging your shortcuts.

6 OZ WATER.

Just water. Filtered works. From the tap is fine.

Scoop it up!: Once it's rock solid (or as solid as boozy water ice gets), scoop it into four dishes or glasses. Get a good sturdy spoon, 'cause this ain't no soft-serve.

Garnish (if you're fancy): A little lemon zest on top makes it look super legit, but if you're just kicking back, skip it. Whatever.

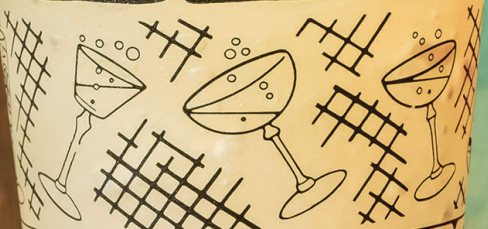
Enjoy your little slice of boozy, lemony heaven!



SCAN FOR PLAYLIST



OUR MANHATTAN BACARDI DAIQUIRI



1 OZ SWEET VERMOUTH	JUICE OF 1/2 LIME	JUICE OF 1/2 LIME
2 OZ WHISKY	1/2 TEASPOON SUGAR	1/2 TEASPOON SUGAR
2 DASHES BITTERS	2 OZ BACARDI RUM	1 1/2 OZ LIGHT RUM
STIR WITH ICE	ONE DASH GRENADINE	
ADD CHERRY	SHAKE WITH FINE ICE	



Sip & Chew Something New

& bring someone
with you.



Sip cider, beer, or wine—each paired with a snack
you didn't know you needed.

Cheese, cookies, chips, & the occasional curveball.

Led by Philly's first Certified Pommelier, these tastings
make you feel like a snack-pairing genius.

**Use code BOGO25 on our website
& bring a friend for free at our next event.**

Offer ends July 31, 2026.



Scan Code



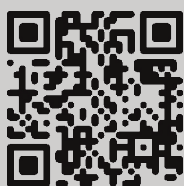
blindbearbeverages.com

JARFACE

"THE SPIRIT" OUT NOW



WANNA LISTEN?



NEED A DRUMMER?



@JARFACE



@JARFACE.MUSIC



JARFACE.MUSIC@GMAIL.COM

What happens when you grind memories into meat and call it lunch. Call it a glizzy. Call it a diner dog. Call it a pastrami tube steak if you want to get technical. But whatever you call it, don't insult it by thinking it came from a grocery store fridge next to the bologna and string cheese. This dog, this creation—is different.

GLIZZY ON RYE

BY STEVE MARTINHO
PHOTOS BY K.C. TINARI

It starts in South Philly, in the back of Porcos, a porchetta shop that shares its walls with the sugar-dusted magic of Small Oven Pastry Shop. Here, between trays of roast pork and laminated dough, Scott is quietly doing something unhinged: making hot dogs from scratch. Real ones. Whole brisket, chilled and cubed, run through a grinder cold enough to sting your knuckles.

No filler. No shortcuts. Just a guy, a stuffer, and the patience to push seasoned beef through steel until it coils like edible rope.

Scott calls the project Pastramsky's. It's a name, a nod, maybe a dare. But behind the branding is a simple, radical act: give a shit. About the meat. About the process. About the flavor of a childhood remembered through steam and spice.

(continued on page 10)







THE DELI DOG THAT COULD

Scott made two dogs that day. The first was straightforward. No frills. Just brisket, seasoning, and technique—a classic hot dog if it were rebuilt by someone who respects its guts.

But the second? The second was a full-on fever dream. A pastrami hot dog. Gruyère cheese folded into the grind. A rub built on coriander, mustard seed, and brown sugar. Slaw sharp enough to wake you up. Golden mustard slicked across the top like deli graffiti. All tucked into a brioche bun from Baker Street Bread Company, the kind that's soft where it needs to be, but strong enough to survive the journey.

It doesn't eat like a gimmick. It eats like a sandwich from a different timeline. One where Katz's Deli got drunk and hooked up with a Jersey boardwalk and this was the beautiful, beefy result.

"What if a pastrami on rye grew legs and started walking?"

MY GRANDFATHER'S RYE

Here's where I get personal. I grew up on this stuff. Worked in a Jewish deli in Jackson, New Jersey. Ran the slicer. Built towers of pastrami and corned beef that leaned like deli Pisa. My pop-pop used to bring home the good stuff—warm pastrami, seeded rye—and we'd all gather around the kitchen table, tearing through it like it was sacred. My grandmother got her liverwurst and we got our joy.

That smell, that ritual, it's wired into me. So when Scott started talking about Katz's, about diners, about making a dog that captured that deli magic, I felt it. Like really felt it. This wasn't nostalgia for show. It was memory ground into meat. And I respected the hell out of it.

THE FLOW OF THE GRIND

The process is as hypnotic as it is technical. Brisket trimmed and chilled. Ground until it's tacky, which Scott says is the gold standard. "You want it to stick together like it knows what it's doing."

Scott loads the stuffer like it's second nature, threads the casing like he's done it in his sleep.

(continued on page 11)





“This meat’s gonna flow like the rivers of Babylon,” Scott Jokes.

He knows exactly what he’s doing. The guy talks like a comic but works like a surgeon. There’s precision beneath the punchlines. Every twist of the casing, every coil of sausage, it all means something.

“You don’t want loose skin on the sausage. That’s no good.”

If you know, you know.



YOU’LL NEED A NAP

When it hits the griddle, the casing pops just slightly. The mustard opens up. The slaw softens. The gruyère goes gooey in the grind. One bite and you’re somewhere else entirely. Somewhere between your favorite diner and a memory of your grandfather’s kitchen. Somewhere warm and you find a little mustard on your lip.

“This is the kind of hot dog you cancel your plans after,”

Scott says. He’s not wrong.



FINAL BITE

A hot dog shouldn’t be this good. But that’s the point. Scott didn’t reinvent anything. He just respected it. He remembered that food doesn’t need to be fancy, it just needs to be made with care and with memory.

With hands that know what good tastes like. Call it a glizzy. Call it a pastrami dog. Call it a mistake you’re happy to make twice. But whatever you do, take a bite.

And then take the rest of the day off.





Scott Sumsky & Chad Durkin

YO!

coffee
drive thru

ICED
& HOT
DRINKS
& FOODS!



Delaware County's only independently owned drive thru coffee shop. Operating out of an old Swiss Farms, we make **YO!** day fun! Mention Stereo Flavors for b-o-g-o.

EVERYTHING BUT THE BREAD



SIDEPROJECTJERKY.COM



MSG

HOW AMERICA LOST ITS DAMN MIND
OVER A LITTLE WHITE POWDER

**GLUTAMATE GATE:
INSIDE AMERICA'S
TASTIEST SCANDAL**

CONFESSIONS
OF AN MSG
CONVERT

HOW THE WEST
GOT IT SO
WRONG

THE WHITE
POWDER WAR

WHITE CRYSTALS,
DARK LIES

FEAR & SEASONING
IN THE SUBURBS

**KIKUNAE
IKEDA:**



THE FATHER
OF UMAMI

**THE UMAMI
UNTRUTH:**
A DECADES-LONG FARCE

"Once, I got sent home from school because they said I had an allergic reaction to eating MSG in Chinese food," recalls Beau Neidhardt of Liberty Kitchen. "They were like, Did you eat anything different this week? Ahhh, that must be it."

You're not alone, Beau. In the 1980s and 1990s, this was practically a rite of passage, a baptism in the Church of American Culinary Delusion. You couldn't toss a cheap paper carton of lo mein without hitting a neon sign screeching NO MSG...as if the kitchen harbored a meth lab out back, smuggling spoonfuls of chemical treason into your dinner.



I remember those signs hanging in windows like medieval hexes to ward off the restless spirits of food critics and suburban mothers who read too many Reader's Digest horror stories. But no one ever explained why MSG was so monstrous, only that it was foreign, artificial, and definitely something your mom's casserole didn't contain (even though it probably did). So, I did what any curious glutton would do: I went digging. And what I found was a saga so posterous, it could only be true.

The Birth of Umami & Its Journey to America

In 1908 a Japanese chemist named Kikunae Ikeda decided he would trap the very essence of deliciousness in crystalline form. Ikeda boiled down kombu seaweed broth until he isolated glutamate, the amino acid responsible for that mouth-coating, lip-smacking savoriness the Japanese called umami. He patented it as monosodium glutamate, or MSG. At first, nobody cared.

Ikeda founded the company, Ajinomoto and they knew how to hustle. They courted Buddhist vegetarians who wanted the illusion of meaty richness without the moral baggage of slaughter. They peddled it to the wives of Japanese elites, marketing little glass bottles of MSG like Chanel No. 5—just sprinkle a little elegance into your soup.

Fast forward to the 1930s. Japan's military machine stomped across East Asia, and MSG tagged along. It ended up in Chinese kitchens, got knocked off by Chinese manufacturers, and eventually made its way to America through the country's blossoming love affair with Chinese food.

By the 1940s, MSG wasn't some obscure import. It was in everything: canned soup, frozen TV dinners, military rations—just another flavor booster among the many "chemicals" in our pantries. And no one lost any sleep about it.

The Letter That Sparked an Epidemic of Fear

Enter Dr. Robert Kwok, a Maryland pediatrician with a taste for northern Chinese food and a peculiar knack for fainting after dinner.

In April 1968, Kwok wrote a letter to the New England Journal of Medicine describing his racing heart, numb arms, and the kind of malaise usually reserved for hangovers or existential crises. He speculated that maybe it was the salt, maybe the cooking wine, or perhaps MSG.

The Journal published the letter under the catchy name "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome," a term that sounds like a B-movie horror flick

The response was a snowball of medical absurdity. Doctors from every corner of the country chimed in with their own tall tales: **Tight faces, numb jaws, dizziness. Symptoms appearing in New York but not London.**

Blame laid on everything from duck sauce to the stress of using chopsticks. You'd think all these inconsistencies would have proved that the syndrome was more superstition than science. But newspapers continued to feast, running breathless stories about the sinister powder lurking in your moo shu pork.

The Pseudoscience That Cemented the Myth

Then came the so-called "experiments." Neurologist Herbert Schaumburg, who originally absolved MSG in a cheeky letter, did an about-face after deciding to eat Chinese food every day in a masochistic quest to induce symptoms. He claimed to feel the worst after wonton soup and hot-and-sour soup, both containing MSG.

From this uncontrolled binge emerged a "study" so riddled with bias and sloppy design it could have been lifted from a Fear and Loathing fever dream. Six volunteers were fed soup in restaurants they already associated with feeling awful.

Fifty-six people were given pure MSG on an empty stomach. Pro-tip: do not consume a handful of any seasoning and expect to feel spry. Yet Schaumburg still declared MSG as "not a wholly innocuous substance."

Psychiatrist Robert Olney injected baby mice with MSG in doses equivalent to you scarfing down an entire sack in one sitting, then announced it caused obesity and brain damage. The studies had small samples, no control groups or blinding.

Other scientists quickly pointed out: Humans eat MSG; we don't mainline it into our veins. Our guts break it down and the placenta filters it. But in the court of public opinion, the verdict was already in. MSG was guilty.

The Power of Suggestion (and a possible hoax)

The hysteria metastasized; Ralph Nader and other activists demanded bans. Chinese restaurants became scapegoats, pariahs in the new moral panic over “foreign chemicals.” Ironically, while Americans averaged about 500 mg of MSG daily, East Asians consumed over 1,700 mg—and somehow managed not to drop dead in the streets.

To add to the confusion, an American orthopedic surgeon named Howard Steele later claimed the infamous letter to the *New England Journal of Medicine* was a hoax. Steele said he made up the name Dr. Kwok, thinking people would associate it with “crock of sh*t” and never expected it to get published. Steele claimed he tried to retract the article, but the journal wouldn’t budge.

The twist? Dr. Kwok was real. A pediatrician in Maryland. His children, still alive today, insist he wrote the letter. Both Steele and Kwok are gone now, so we’ll probably never know. And maybe that’s exactly how someone wanted it.



Accent, MSG in disguise, was re-branded so Americans could feel “safe” sprinkling it on pot roast while calling Chinese food dangerous. It’s the same ingredient, just packaged to look wholesome. A shiny red shaker and a huge FU to the culture it came from.

Why We Still Fear MSG

Today, MSG is one of the most exhaustively studied food additives on Earth. The FDA, the World Health Organization, and countless independent researchers all say the same thing: It’s safe.

If you’re in the 1% who are truly sensitive, you may get a headache or a flush. But most of us can eat it without any reaction.

And yet, the myth lingers, because humans are hardwired to believe the worst about the things we don’t understand, especially if they come from cultures we don’t fully embrace. It’s not just bad science. It’s culinary xenophobia, with a dash of puritanical fear of pleasure.

MSG is not the villain. It’s the unsung hero behind the curtain, making your soup taste richer, your chicken more savory, your palate happier.

So next time someone clutches their pearls over “chemicals,” just remember: everything is chemicals. Even the air you breathe and the tears you shed when you realize you’ve been duped by decades of xenophobia. 

SUMMER of PHO

BY JASON TROJANOWSKI

These days, summer is more oppressive than most first-world governments. I'm on my second shirt, because sweat always wins. Natural deodorant is rendered useless. Cologne only temporarily masks the Italian hoagies under my arms. But the thing I crave... The thing I would trade most of my earthly belongings for is a piping hot bowl of pho.





It's the ultimate expression of flavor, love, and community on a hot day. In Philly, it often means elbowing up to a table in South Philly, already glowing from the elements, but ready to suffer just a little bit more to satisfy the taste buds. To get all the heat (temperature), heat (spice), and unami of the beef, spice, and herb-laden broth that's been slaved over for hours into this gullet. It's satisfying. It's what a national food journalist and an ex-president can enjoy while sitting on milk crates. It's humble. It's opulent. It's what is needed some days to just feel a little bit like a fucking human being. To be connected. To be tapped in. To understand that while it's hot outside, it's nothing compared to where this food comes from.

Summer isn't about avoiding heat, it's about embracing it. It's about sweating for the good things in life. The beach. A hike. An outdoor concert. The warm embrace of soup when it's 97 outside. It's about connecting to where our spicy and hot foods come from. To understand those communities. To realize that pho is amazing, but a bún bò huế might be what actually makes the heat outside feel mild.

Soup, being a thing we reserve for winter, is a silly construct. Nobody says no to ice cream in winter. Nobody. So why do we treat hot months the same way? Embrace it, get down with some hot and spicy this summer. It's not like it's going to get any better.

COMMUNITY + KITCHENS
CULINARY
COLLECTIVE
PHILADELPHIA
PA • US

**WHERE PHILLY'S CHEFS AND CULINARY ENTREPRENEURS COOK
AND GROW THEIR BUSINESSES.**



**CULINARY COLLECTIVE IS A FAMILY-OWNED
COLLECTION OF PRIVATE AND CO-WORKING
COMMERCIAL KITCHEN SPACES FOR PHILLY'S
THRIVING FOOD INNOVATORS.**

**FEATURING CO-WORKING KITCHEN SPACES,
COOK PODS, AND PRIVATE KITCHENS FOR
CHEFS, FOOD TRUCKS, CATERERS, BAKERS,
PACKAGED GOODS PRODUCERS,
AND MORE.**



**INQUIRE:
CULINARYCOLLECTIVE.CO**

**FOLLOW:
@CULINARY.COLLECTIVE**

MEET SOME CULINARY COLLECTIVE MEMBERS



MUCHO PERU

Mucho Peru brings the bold flavors of Peruvian cuisine to Philadelphia with a modern touch. As a family-run business, they blend tradition with global influences to create fresh, unforgettable dishes that celebrate their culinary heritage.

muchoperu.com
[@mucho_peru](https://www.instagram.com/mucho_peru)



MIDNIGHT PASTA BY NATALIA

Natalia hosts interactive pasta parties, where she guides you through a lively pasta making class followed by a five course dinner party featuring the pasta you just made and so much more.

midnightpasta.com
[@midnightpastaco](https://www.instagram.com/midnightpastaco)



THE CAKE VAULT

The Cake Vault is an Immigrant & Woman owned, by-appointment-only bakery specializing in bespoke celebration cakes.

thecakevaultphl.com
[@thecakevault.phl](https://www.instagram.com/thecakevault.phl)



1984 CAKES

1984 Cakes is a Latina owned and operated mobile bakery who specializes in fun flavored macarons, cheesecakes, and decorative cookies. Find them every Thursday and Friday on Broad and Ontario in their mini blue dessert bus!

1984cakes.com
[@1984_cakes](https://www.instagram.com/1984_cakes)



FULL PLATE CULINARY

Full Plate Culinary is a private chef and catering brand redefining comfort food through soulful, chef-driven menus and curated culinary experiences.

fullplateculinary.com
[@fullplate_culinary](https://www.instagram.com/fullplate_culinary)



MOJI MASALA

moji masala brings bold, regional Indian flavors to your kitchen with chef-crafted spice blends and easy, modern recipes. Each packet includes a step-by-step recipe and QR-linked video, so you can cook real authentic Indian food—no guesswork, no shortcuts - just pure flavor!

mojimasala.com
[@mojimasala](https://www.instagram.com/mojimasala)

Chopped Hoagies Aren't Real



There was a time when birds were just birds. They chirped, they pooped, they dive-bombed your Wawa shorti with the precision of a Pentagon drone.

And maybe, just maybe, that's because birds are Pentagon drones. "Birds Aren't Real" is the kind of conspiracy you almost want to believe. Not because it makes sense, but because reality has become such a dumb show that satire feels like the last honest thing we've got.



Which brings us to chopped hoagies. If you haven't been caught in the crossfire of lunch meat and shredded lettuce, consider yourself blessed. But for the rest of us, the trend is everywhere.

Your algorithms are polluted with your friend's cousin chopping ham and cheese on Instagram. Every third sandwich shop is advertising their latest "viral remix" like they're DJ Khaled with a meat slicer.

They are the birds of the sandwich world. Plastic, artificial, designed in a lab by marketers and TikTok teens with ring lights and zero respect for bread structure.

It's a hoax. A scam. A culinary deepfake.

(continued on page 27)







Jason Okdeh knows. He's the owner of Farina Di Vita in South Philly, where hoagies still have integrity. He grew up with something called hoagie dip. Yeah, it's got all the usual suspects: American cheese, provolone, prosciutto, genoa salami, ham, capicola, turkey, lettuce, tomato, onion, cherry peppers, brine, oil, vinegar, oregano, pepper, salt, garlic, and mayo. It's a party-pleaser meant for chips and crudités. But don't you dare try to press that mess into a roll.

I watched Jason make the sandwich equivalent of a war crime. He scooped hoagie dip onto a fresh Italian loaf, closed it up like it was nothing, looked me dead in the eyes, and hurled the whole thing into the sink. Clang. Meat juice everywhere.

"That's what you don't do," he said, wiping his hands.

Because here's the thing. A hoagie is not a chopped salad in a roll. It's a delicate architecture. Layered meats, draped like silk. Cheese tucked like a love letter. Oil and vinegar kissing the shredded lettuce just enough to glisten, not drown. There's intention and balance. A real hoagie makes you taste everything.

A chopped hoagie? It tastes like everything at once. It's chaos. It's noise. It's the equivalent of throwing all your socks and underwear in one drawer and calling it organization. It's a bastardized American burrito with deli meat instead of soul.

We're not anti-innovation. We're anti-laziness disguised as revolution. Chopped hoagies are a cop out. They're sandwich slop.

So no, we're not buying it. Birds aren't real. And neither are chopped hoagies. ☹

HOAGIE DIP

Date	Table	Guests	Server	07174
DRINK - SPECIAL - APPS - SOUP/SALAD - DESSERT				
-	American Cheese (NYer)			
-	Provolone (Mild)			
-	Prosciutto (Domestic)			
-	Genoa Salami (DeLuco)			
-	Ham Capicola (Thumann)			
-	Turkey			
-	Lettuce (Iceberg)			
-	Tomatoes (5x6)			
-	Red Onion			
-	Cherry Peppers			
-	Cherry Pepper Brine			
-	olive oil			
-	Red Wine Vinegar			
-	Oregano / B. Pap / Kosher Salt			
Thank You — Please Come Again				Tax Total
ncco ncco.com				MADE IN THE USA 600

HOAGIE DIP RECIPE

BY JASON OKDEH

This isn't a tough recipe by any means. The main thing is making sure all your pieces are chopped to a uniform size. It makes for better consistency, and you want all the makings of a hoagie in every bite. Use what you have, skip what you don't. Serve it with chips, vegetables, crackers, or whatever you'd like. Just don't put it on a roll.

INGREDIENTS

AMERICAN CHEESE
PROVOLONE
PROSCIUTTO
GENOA SALAMI
HAM CAPICOLA
TURKEY
LETTUCE
TOMATOES
RED ONION

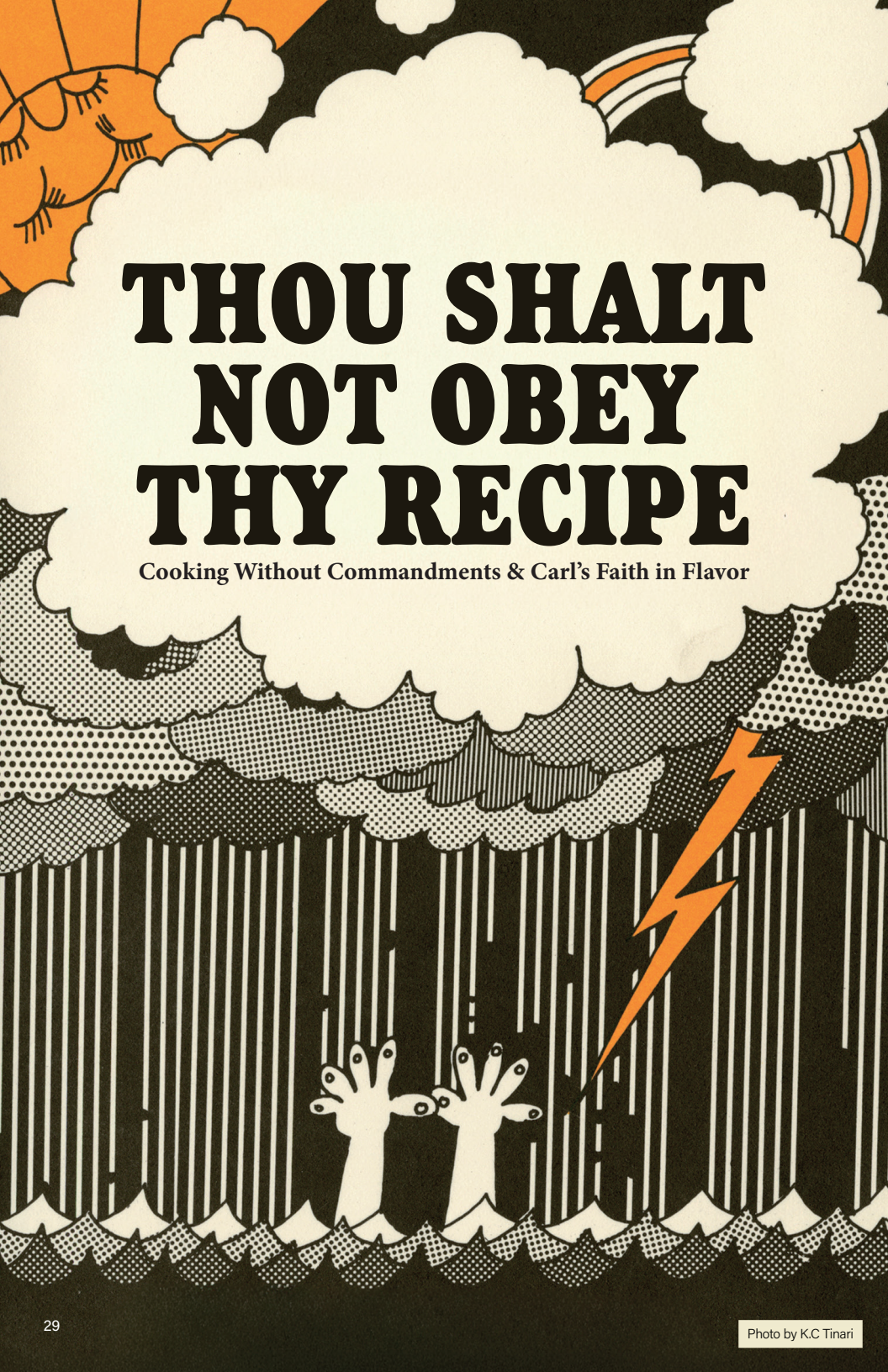
CHERRY PEPPERS
CHERRY PEPPER BRINE
OLIVE OIL
RED WINE VINEGAR
OREGANO
BLACK PEPPER
KOSHER SALT
GRANULATED GARLIC
MAYONNAISE

METHOD

Chop everything up. Add the wet ingredients. Mix together.



SCAN FOR PLAYLIST



THOU SHALT NOT OBEY THY RECIPE

Cooking Without Commandments & Carl's Faith in Flavor

The first thing Chef Ian Moroney gave me wasn't a recipe. It was a playlist.

Jerry Garcia. Captain Beefheart. Cream. Fuzzy, unpredictable stuff. Music that takes a left turn on purpose. The kind of thing that's less about hitting the right note and more about feeling it.

That's how Ian cooks.

We were making Sikil Pak—a pumpkin seed dip from the Yucatán, but the exact dish didn't matter. What mattered was the mindset: don't follow the recipe like a robot. Recipes are suggestions, not scripture. And if you're not willing to burn something on purpose or swap lime for lemon, what are you even doing?



Ian starts his Sikil Pak like a salsa verde. Tomatillos, garlic, serranos, onion, tossed in oil, hit with salt, and broiled until blackened.

In Mexican kitchens, there's a word for that: tatamar. To char. To burn. To unlock flavor through fire. Ian's doing it on an electric burner.

It's not exactly the traditional tool for the job, but it gets the job done. You work with what you've got.

Then it all gets blended with cilantro, lime juice, and toasted pumpkin seeds. It's smooth, bright, and a little unpredictable. The way it should be.

(continued on page 31)



While the blender screams and the fire alarm flirts with going off, Ian shrugs:

“The more you learn about food, the more you can dismantle it.”

Cooking, like music, gets interesting when you stop trying to be perfect. Make something that feels right. Let it groove. Let it go off-script. Use the wrong citrus. Burn the vegetables. Name a dinner party after a guy who doesn't exist.

The second I tasted it, I thought: potato salad. Not the kind drowning in mayo with hard-boiled eggs—more like the idea of potato salad. Cool, creamy, tangy, the kind of thing that ties a plate together.

Ian paused and laughed. “Never thought of it like that.”

That's what made it click. This wasn't about nostalgia. It was about permission, to see things differently, to let instinct drive.

Carl, the underground dinner party he runs with his partner Sharon, is built on that idea. A supper club with no fixed menu. A kitchen that's part home, part improv stage. Sharon's the scientist. Ian's the soloist. Together, they test, tweak, and trust their gut. 

There's a line from the Jerry Garcia track on that playlist that keeps echoing: “Can you thread a needle? Can you shoot the moon?”

That's the game. That's cooking without a net. The recipe? Just background noise.



SIKIL PAK

By Ian Moroney



INGREDIENTS

2 CUPS TOASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS
1-2 SERRANO CHILES
3 GARLIC CLOVES

1 SMALL ONION (QUARTERED)
5 TOMATILLOS
1 BUNCH OF CILANTRO

METHOD

1. Turn on broiler.
2. Lightly coat chiles, onion, garlic, and tomatillos with oil. Lightly season with salt.
3. Put vegetables under the broiler and char until softened and blackened in spots.
4. Remove vegetables from oven. Place in a food processor or blender.
5. Add pumpkin seeds and cilantro.
6. Purée until desired consistency.
7. Add salt and lime juice to taste.

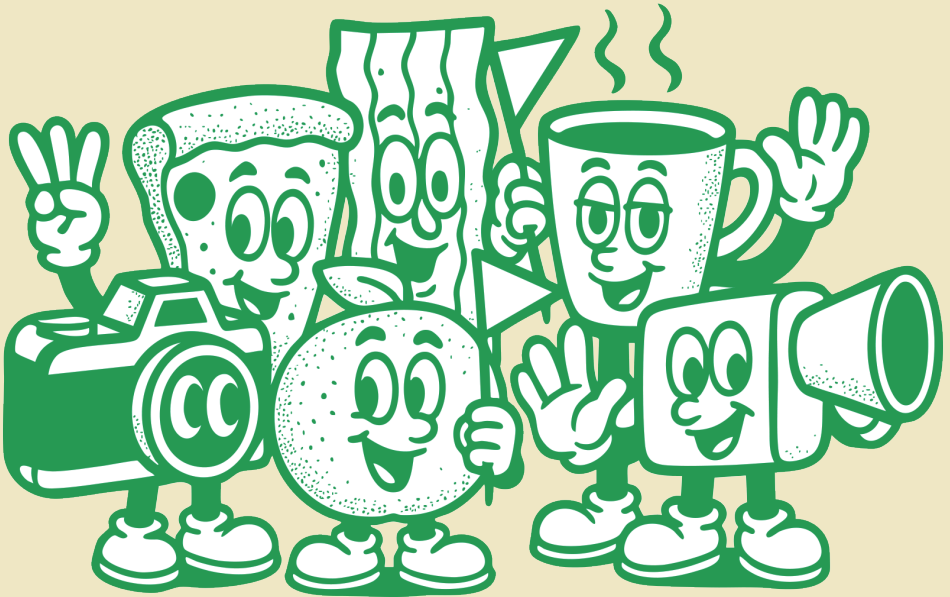


SCAN FOR PLAYLIST



Stereo Flavors Media

DRIVEN BY CULTURE, ROOTED IN FLAVOR



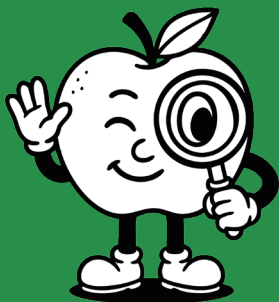
Stereo Flavors Media is a creative studio built for the hospitality world. We work with restaurants and food brands to find their voice, tell their story, and build content that actually connects.

With a background in hospitality, television, and advertising, we understand the pressure behind the pass. We're here to make sure your brand feels as real as the work you put into it.



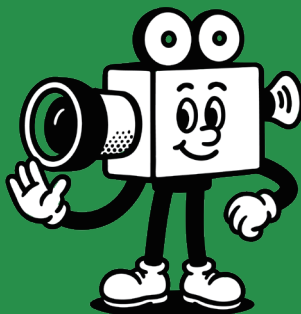
STEREOFLOURSMEDIA.COM
[@STEREOFLOURSMEDIA](https://www.instagram.com/STEREOFLOURSMEDIA)

OUR SERVICES



STRATEGY & STORYTELLING

We help you find your voice and build a clear, consistent story that actually connects with words, visuals, and direction that make sense for who you are.



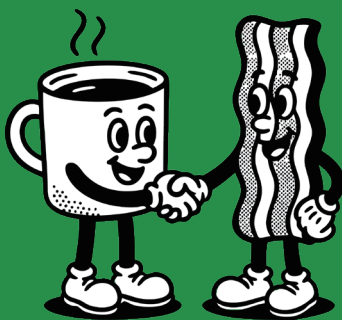
PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

We shoot real content that feels lived-in. From kitchen chaos to quiet prep, we capture the moments people remember, even if they don't notice them at first.



DIGITAL & SOCIAL ADS

We run focused campaigns on Google and social media that put your brand in front of the right people without chasing trends or selling out.



CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

From pop-ups to merch to limited drops, we help you create cultural moments through smart collabs and experiences that extend your brand beyond the plate.



STEREOFLAVORS.COM